

With just a few days left before the April 15th tax filing deadline, 95% of working Americans can expect to see their taxes lowered this year due to measures fought for by Rep. Debbie Halvorson (IL-11) to reduce the burden on Illinois families.

"Our working families and small businesses are working through turbulent economic times, and reducing their tax burdens will give them the room they need to grow and bring our economy back," said Halvorson. "Our families will see much-needed help because of these lower taxes; whether it means they can put another payment towards their house, or expand their business, I fought for tax relief because our families need it, and it's good for Illinois."

The Recovery Act passed last year consisted of about 40% tax cuts. The Act reduced taxes by almost \$100 billion last year and by \$220 billion this year. For American families, this translates into significantly lower taxes and larger tax refunds-in fact, refunds are up 10% this year.

"As my constituents finalize their tax returns, I hope they'll take advantage of many new credits and deductions created by the Recovery Act," said Halvorson.

These tax breaks include:

- **Making Work Pay credit:** 95% of working families are receiving this credit, which means \$400 less in taxes for individuals and \$800 less for married couples.
- **College expenses:** Families and students can claim up to \$2,500 to pay for college expenses.
- **First home purchase:** If you have bought your first home by April 30 of this year, you can claim an \$8,000 deduction. Many other homebuyers can claim a deduction, as well.
- **Energy efficiency incentives:** If you've made your home more energy efficient through steps like adding insulation or energy-efficient windows, you're probably already saving money on your energy bills. But now, you can also claim a \$1,500 tax credit.
- **New vehicle purchases:** If you bought a new vehicle between February 17 and December 31 of last year, you can deduct the state and local sales taxes from your federal tax return.
- **Family tax credits:** If you're a moderate-income family, the Recovery Act increased your tax credits: the Earned Income Tax Credit is now \$5,657, and it's now easier to claim the Child Tax Credit.
- **Tax-free unemployment benefits:** Unemployment benefits are usually taxable-but if you were looking for work last year, the Recovery Act made the first \$2,400 in unemployment

benefits tax-free.

In addition to the these tax credits, Halvorson has worked to pass tax relief through proposing H R 2146

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a bill to extend the property tax exemption on Federal returns. Halvorson also recently had legislation she authored included in the now-signed

HIRE Act

, which included her small business tax write-off for new equipment purchases through the end of this year.

For an easy way to see which tax benefits are available to you under the Recovery Act, check out the Tax Savings Tool at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/recovery/tax-saving-tool> .